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SUBJECT: MEETING OF G8 COUNTER-TERRORISM ADVISORY GROUP IN
GUYANA

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Russian Embassy in Georgetown hosted the first local meeting of the G-8 Counter-Terrorism Advisory Group (CTAG) on October 20. Guyana ForMin Rudy Insanally said the terrorist threat is not prominent in Guyana but also called for capacity-building assistance in enacting counter-terrorism legislation and in meeting U.N. mandated reporting requirements. Post has reservations about the pre-fabricated draft report of the meeting, which the Russian Embassy was seeking to clear by the afternoon of Monday, October 23. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) In his 10-minute opening statement, read from a prepared text, Russian Ambassador to Guyana Vladimir Starikov offered background on the CTAG and disseminated material from the G8 Action Plan for Capacity Building to Combat Terrorism, taken from the Russian G8 Presidency website. He also mentioned the need to examine the intersection between drugs, organized crime, and terrorism. Insanally then opened by saying the CTAG meeting is a useful mechanism to transfer counter-terrorism concerns at a high level but that the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Ministry of Legal Affairs would be in a better position to work on specific terrorism threats. Insanally said that Guyana had signed OAS and UN Conventions against terrorism and also endorsed the CARICOM position against terrorism emanating from the Heads of Government meeting in 2005. He said that terrorism is not a prominent threat in Guyana, but that it must nevertheless be aware of the threat, having first been affected by terrorism with the bombing of the Cubana airliner in 1976 and also through the three dozen Guyanese victims in the attack on the World Trade Center.

¶3. (U) As far as counter-terrorism challenges are concerned, Insanally said that Guyana has difficulty keeping up with international reporting requirements resulting from its participation in counter-terrorism agreements. Guyana last submitted a report to the UN Committee on Terrorism in 2002, and the GOG is in the process of preparing another submission. Insanally also identified Guyana's porous borders (Suriname, Venezuela, Brazil) as a vulnerability, noting specifically that Plan Colombia has pushed illicit activity to other parts of South America in the search for alternate routes to the U.S. To this end, he said that foreign assistance "is not in any measure comparable to the need". In addition to making international reporting requirements more "user-friendly", Insanally also called for legal assistance to Parliament to build its capacity to enact counter-terrorism related legislation. Insanally also said the GOG has "an excellent working relationship with the FBI and DEA". COMMENT: Post would characterize this relationship as almost non-existent. END COMMENT.

¶4. (U) Following Insanally's departure, the participants--from the Russian, U.S., European Commission, Canadian and British embassies--discussed a pre-written draft

report of the meeting, which the Russians were hoping to clear by that afternoon. The draft, apparently based on a template from Moscow, did not incorporate any of Insanally's remarks, and it also referenced "considerable" efforts on the part of the GOG to prevent terrorist ideology. Emboffs as well as the Canadian High Commissioner, Acting EU Head of Delegation, and British Deputy High Commissioner took issue with this language, as such effort on the part of the GOG is not apparent. The Canadian also took issue with language in the draft report saying that the GOG "recruits victims of terrorism to counteract the terrorist menace on the country". The Russian political counsellor, Maxim Pimenov, replied that that language was part of what was sent by the G8 Presidency but that he would be willing to remove it if that was the group's consensus.

15. (SBU) Based on the group's concerns, Pimenov agreed to rework the draft the same day and send for clearance by Monday afternoon. The revised text incorporates some of what Insanally said but otherwise exaggerates the GOG's efforts to counter terrorist ideology. Post advised Pimenov at 1031 hrs Monday October 23 that it cannot endorse the draft report at present and is forwarding the latest iteration to Washington for review. Post will e-mail a copy of the draft report to S/CT and WHA/CAR.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: The haste with which the Russian chair of the CTAG sought to finalize the report of the meeting suggests that it is rubber-stamping the process rather than trying to engage in meaningful dialogue. That view is supported by Starikov's willingness to accept any and all changes to the draft report without any substantial counter discussions. END COMMENT.

ROBINSON